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Daily Highlights

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W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- ◆ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia reaffirms, upon arrival in Phnom Penh, his commitment to ensure effective functioning of United Nations Transition Authority in that country, as soon as possible.
- ◆ Prime Minister of Somalia repeats his appeal to Security Council for formal meeting on deteriorating situation in Mogadiscio.
- ◆ Lebanon condemns, in letter to Secretary-General, continuing attacks by Israel on Lebanese villagers and their property in southern part of country.
- ◆ Conference on Disarmament begins ten-week 1992 session in Geneva.
- ◆ Chairman of Global Environment Facility briefs correspondents at Headquarters about Facility's programme for helping developing countries deal with environmental issues.
- ◆ European Community begins 1992 as full member of Food and Agriculture Organization following formal admission by Agency's Governing body last November.

The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, arrived today in the capital city of Phnom Penh.

In a short statement upon his arrival, Mr. Akashi reiterated his commitment to ensure the effective deployment of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) without delay, and stressed that, in view of the difficult financial situation of the United Nations, it was necessary that funds for the mission be provided immediately, so that the operation could start as soon as possible.

The Special Representative met later today with Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State and President of the Supreme National Council (SNC) of Cambodia,

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with whom he reviewed all the aspects of the implementation of the Paris Agreements of 23 October, 1991.

Tomorrow, Mr. Akashi will meet with Foreign Minister of Cambodia Nor Namhong and with the President of Democratic Kampuchea, Khieu Samphan.

The Prime Minister of Somalia, Omer Arteh Ghalib, has appealed to the Security Council for its consideration of the deteriorating situation in the capital city of Mogadiscio.

In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, dated 20 January, Mr. Ghalib said he was "confident that with the background and knowledge of the new Secretary-General" and his prior commitment to reconciliation in Somalia, the Security Council would come up with a programme of effective action to end the fighting and contribute to cementing peace and stability in the country.

The letter, which was transmitted by Chargé d'affaires Fartun Mohamed Hassan, follows a similar request from the Somali Prime Minister, dated 15 December 1991.
(S.23445)

Lebanon has condemned what it calls, the "latest acts of Israeli aggression" against Lebanese villagers and their property in the southern part of the country.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, yesterday, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Khalil Makkawi, said Israel had continued bombing Tebnin, Haris, Hadatha and Aita El-Jabal. It had also besieged Rashaf, situated outside the border area. He said that at least 80 per cent of the inhabitants had been forced to flee those villages and that Israel had been able to "incorporate" Rashaf into the area occupied by Israel by cutting off the existing road and building a new one.

Mr. Makkawi said Lebanon wished to alert the international community to the fact that Israel was seeking to extend the zone which it occupies in Lebanese territory.
(S/23453)

The Conference on Disarmament began yesterday in Geneva its 1992 session, which will last approximately ten weeks.

The General Assembly adopted a series of resolutions, at its forty-sixth session, entrusting specific responsibilities to the Conference. Among other things, the Assembly welcomed the progress in the negotiations on the draft convention banning all chemical weapons and urged the Conference to intensify its work with a view to completing the negotiations in 1992.

(more)

Another text reaffirmed the particular responsibilities of the Conference in the negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. It urged the nuclear-weapon States to agree promptly to appropriate verifiable and militarily significant interim measures, with a view to concluding such a treaty.

The world's single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the Conference consists of the five nuclear-weapon States -- China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States -- and members of other military significant States, as well as neutral and non-aligned countries which form the Group of 21. Non-members are invited, upon request, to participate in its work.

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The Chairman of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Director of the World Bank's Environment Department, Mohamed El-Ashry, told correspondents today at a briefing at Headquarters that the GEF, which is a pilot programme for helping developing countries deal with environmental issues, was likely to be the focus of the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Environment Conference in March.

He said that in the preparations for that Conference, scheduled for June in Rio de Janeiro, GEF had taken on particular importance as a funding mechanism for the global environment conventions, such as those on climate change and biodiversity now being negotiated.

A three-year experiment which began a year ago, the Facility provides grants for investment projects and technical assistance aimed at protecting the global environment and transferring environmentally sound technologies. Its work falls into four main areas: global warming, conservation of biological diversity, protection of international waters from pollution and protection of the ozone layer.

Responsibility for implementing the GEF is shared between the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In initiating the proposal one year ago, the Facility was sponsored by the French and German Governments; today there are about 36 participating Governments and the budget is approximately \$1.3 billion.

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The European Economic Community (EEC) is now a full member of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), following a vote by the Agency's Governing body last November.

In a press release issued at Headquarters today, the EEC said that the admission represented a significant step for the Community at the United Nations, marking the first time that it had been accepted as a full-fledged member of any United Nations agency. Before becoming a full FAO participant, the EEC had been limited to "observer" status in the Agency's discussions and decisions, many of which involve areas of community competence.

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